

THE YANKING OF JOE VAIL

**MAYBE THE VICTIM OF A DEER,
MAYBE ONLY A LIAR.**

HIS EXPLANATION WAS THAT THE DEER HIT HIM AND HOOKED HIM AND KICKED HIM, AND

"It is puzzling me like everything," said John Silbert, the travelling groceryman, "trying to think it out whether my old friend Joe Vall is lying, or whether he is simply the innocent victim of peculiar circumstances. I've been trying for two weeks now to make up my mind, and I can't, and it worries me like fury.

"Once a year I go up to spend a few days with Joe during the season of pike and fishing through the ice, and the winter we didn't get up there until late. I had thought to Joe that I would be there on a certain day. It was six miles to the farm, the article I was going to write

place, and Joe always meets me at the train to drive me in. In this time, though, Joe wasn't there, but a man that works for him was in his place. After we had got started a ways I said to Joe's man:

"Where'd Joe? Why didn't he come in?"

"'Why," the man, 'didn't you hear about it?"

"'Hear about it?" I said. "'No. Hear about what?"

"'About Joe," said the man, looking at me as if he was surprised that I hadn't heard about it.

"'No," said I. "'What about Joe?"

"'He's yanked," said the man.

"'Yanked?" said I. "'What do you mean?"

"'I mean he's yanked!' replied the man, somewhat positively. "A deer bit him, or hooked him, or kicked him, or sunpim' or other like that, and Joe killed it. It might a been in the season for deer to bite or hook or kick Joe, but it don't seem to been in the season for Joe to kill the

"'Arrested him?' I asked, puzzled and worried.

"'Yes,' replied the man. 'Took him up. Yanked him. And it looks to me as if they was goin' to sock it to him, too.'

"'Isn't in jail, is he?' I asked.

"'No,' said the man. 'Leastways, not yet.'

"But it looks to me as if they was going to sock it to him, and if they sock it to him I don't see but what he'll sock 'em back. I don't see no fault in that."

"This wasn't never pleasant none to a man who had come out for a couple of days' sport, but I thought I wouldn't coax any more information from Joe's pessimistic factotum. I would wait until I heard Joe's story. That might put an entirely different face on the matter, I thought."

"When we arrived at Joe's place Joe came out, and he said, 'Well, once they was here, they was here, and I was despondent. After greeting, he said:

"'Well, I s'pose you heerd I was ranked?'

"I told Joe I had heard so."

"'What be comin' to,' said he, 'when a der kin come and chaw you, and rip you, and jump on you, and do anything else he turns places to you to make your wife a widdier, and, if the

"You got to lay there and take it without raising your hand as in the deer, unless you want to give up your hand and mind for the Grand Jury! What are we comin' to?"

"I told Joe I didn't know, and asked for particulars of this difficulty he seemed to have got into."

"How did it happen, Joe?" I asked.

"It happened the aggravatetestest kind!" said Joe. "You know Bushmiller's Pond, don't you?"

Will, who was sitting next me, said, "That's the picklerick. Say, John! I never see 'em bite so!"

I only had ten lines in, and then picklerick bit so fast I had to pull out five or 'them lines 'cause I was picklerickin' 'em out so fast I couldn't get 'em to haul out the fish. Tip-ups in the air all the time, and keepin' 'em on the run for more'n an hour."

"The way it was rosin' I see that if them pick-

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“I didn't want to be run down and walked over by a no deer, and so I turned square around and I saw a deer about 100 yds. away. I saw a deer ought to up and none! According to the general idea of the nature o' deer, that buck ought to be scared half to death then and there, and I didn't see him bounce away like a gale of wind. Did he do it? I had a hunch he did. I didn't know. No, sir, he didn't. Instead of turpin 'an bound-in' away like a real, law-abidin' deer ought to do, he rised up the bristles on his neck till they were as stiff as iron. He was a real, law-abidin' mad bull, he come for me like a locomotive.

““Here,” I says, “That buck acts to be a little if he had an idea o' doin' some hookin'.”

“I didn't know he was comin' to me, I was learnin' where I stood I jumped to one side. The deer was goin' so fast that he went on by me

didn't calulate to stand there and be hooked into hoostings by that buck, and away I dogged. 'fore the buck could ketch me I was rantan-kerous enough to foller me. He was rantan-kerous enough, all right, and he follered up, but I was a little more than rantan-kerous. I looked up to deer, John. I've always got deer down as being critters that was high feelin' and wouldn't stoop to do anything low. I'd been told that I'd been told that I'm appointed in deer! They ain't what I've always cracked 'em up to be. If that buck had been of the natur I've always got deer natur to do to him, I'd have been a little more than rantan-kerous, and jest as I had grabbed the trunk of that tree and was goin' up it like a red squirrel, he'd have roared up and fastened onto me with his big teeth, and he'd have been a little more than rantan-kerous.

down ag'in so quick that I can't never tell you now which end of 'em hit the snow first! Fastened onto me just as if he was nothin' more than a sneakin', snarin', sniffin', sheep-stealin' dog, insted of a bold and boundin' roobuck of the mountains! Disappinted! I was never so disappinted in my life!

"Then what does that deer do! Nothin' only chuck me clean back on the pond ag'in, and come a follerin me as tight as he could come. He came so tight that he stubbed his toes on me, and went all in a heap on the ice himself."

"I was mad. This is a sign a' lookin' to you!" I says, "I hain't got no objections to you havin' the hull o' that pond to yourself if you want it." I says, "but there hain't no deer ever lived kin stealin' up and bite me like a durn ornery sheep-stealin' dog!"

"The deer was a-comin' for me head on ag'in and I knowed from the way he looked that he was 'intendin' to hock me down and then chock the lumber!" I says, "I was a-tryin' to get him and got up the tree this time if he hadn't bit me another time. That was more'n I could stand!" I says, "he come a-prancin' up to me with his head down and his horns a-standin' by the horns, whopped him over on his back, and run my knife across his throat. For he ever was a-tryin' to hock me down and then chock the lumber!" I says, "I hain't no doubt in my mind, I do you know. I was a-tryin' to hock him, but he was a-tryin' to hock me!"

"Well, sir, the first thing I knowed this mornin' Gabe Sawyer, the constable, comes over here and says, 'Gabe, you got a horse named me into hash besides? Not this year!'"

"Joe," says he, "I've got a WARRANT for you, and I'll have to thank you."

"Yank mel!" I says. "What fur?"

"You'll be deer soon asen," he says.

"I was so took bad I couldn't say a darn word till me and Gabe got down to the 'Squire's. Then I up and told 'em just how it happened, but if the 'Squire didn't bind me over for the murder, I wouldn't have had my bull blame clearin'. Now, I jest want to know what we be comin' to! If the

[illegible]

"I caught a nice lot o' pickerel, but I haven't been able to make up any mind yet whether my friend Joe is a liar or simply the victim of me."

THE YANKING OF JOE VAIL.
MAYBE THE VICTIM OF A DEER,
MAYBE ONLY A LIAR.

His Explanation Was That the Deer Hit Him and Knocked Him and Kicked Him, and That He Only Acted in Self-Defense—But the Carcass of the Deer Had a Bullet Hole in It.

"It is puzzling me like everything," said John Gilbert, the travelling groceryman, "trying to

ly, or whether he is simply the innocent victim of peculiar circumstances. I've been trying for two weeks now to make up my mind, and I can't, and it worries me like fury.

"Once a year I go up to spend a few days with Joe during the season of pickled fishing through the woods. This winter I did not get up there until late. I had sent word to Joe that I would be there on a certain day. It is a six-mile drive from the railroad station in Joe's place, and Joe always meets me at the train to drive me in. This time, though, Joe wasn't there, but a man that works for him was in his place. After we had got started a way I said to the man,

"'Where's Joe? Why didn't he come in?'

"'Why,' said the man, 'didn't you hear about it?'

"'Hear about it?' I said. 'Get up about what?'

as if he was surprised that I hadn't heard about it.

"No," said I. "What about Joe?"

"He's yanked," said the man.

"Yanked?" said I. "What do you mean?"

"I mean he's yanked!" replied the man, somewhat positively. "A deer bit him, or hooked him, or kicked him, or sumpin' or other like that, and Joe killed it. It might a been in the season for deer to bite or hook or kick Joe, but it don't seem to been in the season for Joe to kill the deer for doin' of it, and so they yanked him. That's what I mean."

"Arrested him?" I asked, puzzled and worried.

"Yes," replied the man. "Took him un-

"'No,' said the man. 'Leastways, not yit. But it looks to me as if they was goin' to sock it to him, and if they sock it to him I don't see but what he'd get as good as a fall.'

"This wasn't very pleasant news to a man who had come out for a couple of days' sport, but I thought I wouldn't coast any more information out of you," said Joe, and he started to wait until I heard Joe's story. That might put an entirely different face on the matter, I thought.

"When we arrived at Joe's place Joe came out to meet me. I saw at once that he was despondent. After greetings he said:

"Well, I s'pose you heard I was ranked?"

"I told Joe I had heard so."

"I guess you heard I was ranked, 'when a deer kin come and chaw you and rip you, and jump on you, and do something else he turn places to you to make your wife a widder, and, if the mooner the season don't happen to be just right, you got to lay there and take it without raising your hand agin the deer, unless you want to give me a cousin?"

"I said Joe I didn't know, and asked for particulars as to this difficulty he seemed to have got into."

"How did it happen, Joe?" I asked.

"It happened the aggravatest kind!" said Joe. "You know Bushmiller's Pond, don't you?"

"Yes, I know it."

"Well, I was out there one day, and I was pickering. Say, John! I never see 'em bite so!"

"I only had ten lines in, and then nickered bit so I was obliged to pull 'em out."

"I guess you couldn't get around to any more quick than that."

"The way it was goin' I see that if them pikerel didn't let up on me I'd be so tired I'd never get home so I jest pulled up all my lines and quit. You ought to been there and seen those stacks o' nickerel I had layin' round there on the ice. I see there wasn't no kind o' use o' me thinkin' o' gittin' anyways nigh a quarter of an em home by backin' 'em in so I was startin' to head back to Sam and the boys. I was just about to turn back when I heard a noise behind me. I looked back over my ax shoulder, and there I see a damnin' big

"You gonna make it down here, or are you
 gonna snow the old fellow back and
 footin' First along I thought he hadn't
 per' sniffed me, and was only crosin' the pon-
 der I didn't want to be run down and walked over
 by no deer, and so I turned square around and
 hollered at him. Now what had that consarned
 deer ought to up and done? Accordin' to the gen-
 eral' idee of the natur' o' deer, that buck ought
 to be scared half to death then and there, and
 turned and bounced away like a gale o' wind.
 Did he do it? If he did, I hadn't heard of it yet.
 No, sir, he didn't. Inste'd of turnin' an' bound-

"Here," I says, "That buck acts to me as if he had an idee o' doin' some hookin'."

"That's what he had, too, and as he come tearin' down the hill, I was thinkin' 'bout how deer was goin' so fast that he went on by me more'n fifty yards 'fore he could stop and turn. I didn't calculate to stand there and be hooked by a buck, and I was thinkin' 'bout how I was 'fore, hopin' to git there and climb a tree 'fore the buck could ketch me if he was rantankerous enough to foiler me. He was rantankerous, but he was smart, and he was thinkin' 'bout not climbin' the tree. I have always kind o' looked up to deer, John. I've always sort o' deer down as bein' critters that was high feelin' and was smart, and was thinkin' 'bout things."

"But I want to tell it right now that I'm disappointed in deer! They ain't what I've al-

seen of the nater. I've always got deer natur
want, and jest as I had grabbed the trunk o'
that tree and was goin' up it like a red squirrel
that buck reached up and fastened onto me with
his teeth where my hind gaiter belt was. He
tons is hitched to my muskrat. I was pulled
down as quick as I could. I can't never tell you
now which end o' me hit the snow first. Fast-
ened onto jest as if he had nothin' more
than a muskrat in his gaiter. I fastened onto
dog, insted of a bold end boundin' roebuck o'
the mountain! Disapp'inted! I was never so
disapp'inted in my life!

Q. Did you see the deer do anythin' else?
A. Yes, he chuck me clean back on the pond ag'in, and

"This is a-goin' a leetle too fur!" I says, "I hadn't got no objections to you havin' the bull o' that pond to yourself if you want it." I was a-standin' there with my hands on my hips, sneakin' up and bite me like a durn ornery sheepstealin' dog without me a hittin' back!"

"The deer was a-comin' in my head on ag'in and was a-foamin' the way he looked that he was platin' to take me for a ride. I was a-lookin' at the innards out o' me. I'd a turned and dodged him and got up the tree this time if he hadn't

stand, and when he comes a prancin' up to me with his head down to scoop me, I ketchin' him by the neck, and I'm a throwin' him over my shoulder and run my knife across his throat, for he ev'ry time he comes up to me, he's a tryin' to kill me. I knowed what he had run ac'in'. Did I? Well, do you s'pose I'm goin' to let a feller come and stomp me and then I'm a goin' to let him go? No, I'm a throw him into back besides! Not this year, no."

"Well, sir, the first thing I knowed this mornin' Gabe Sawyer, the constable, comes over here, and says to me:

"'Gabe, I've got a warrant for you, and I'll have to yank you.'"

"'Killin' me?' I says. 'What fur?'"

"'Yankin' deer outen season,' he says. 'It's the law, and I'm a goin' to yank you.'"

“Squire, work the land and I’ll see you down to the barn. You’ll find the carcasses of the deer and the deer heads all happened, but if the ‘Squire didn’t bind me over to ‘pear ‘fore the Grand Jury, you kin have my bull ‘flame clearin’. Now, I jest don’t know if you’re waitin’ in the barn, but if you’re not, the month ain’t right you’ve got to lay down and let deer chaw and horn and stomp the daylighte outen you, and leave your wife a ‘squire or the ‘Squire hold for the Grand Jury. I got that ‘turn ‘bout the ‘Squire, and I’ll see the carcass hangin’ out, here in the barn. Come and see it.”

I went out to the barn. The deer was a big one, I was mistaken. I wondered how the world Joe could have whopped it on its back.

found a hole in its side, just behind the left shoulder. The hole was fresh and I could put my bullet hole all the way in it. The hole was a bullet hole, sure."

"Why, Joe, I said, 'here's a bullet hole in this deer.'"

"He came around and looked at it. He stood a minute as if dumb with amazement. Then he struck his fist against the side of the barn and shouted:

"'320 this here, very minute teknow who plunked that bullet in that deer. No wonder that deer bit me. No wonder he wanted to hook and stomp the daylight out o' me. I taink I knowed that bullet's what done it. I taink I knowed it was a '320. I taink I knowed it was a 'prowl'n' bushwhacker. I taink I knowed it was a deer, and the pain o' the wound jest set him crazy, and he turned in to spit it out on me."

"I've got a couple of deer here, but they'll sock it to me. I'll give \$20 to know who fired that bullet. Here, Sam. Take this here deer down cellar and we'll cut it up and salt it down 'fore it spoils."

"I caught a nice lot o' pickerel, but I haven't been able to make up my mind yet whether my friend is a liar."